



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southwest Region  
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Long Beach, California 90802- 4213

JUL 22 2005

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Mr. Donald K. Hansen  
Chairman, Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

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JUL 25 2005

PFMC

Dear Mr. Hansen: *DM*

I am taking this opportunity to inform you of some of the key issues discussed at the 73<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) held in Lanzarote, Spain, June 20-24, 2005. A number of fishery management and conservation topics were on the agenda and several were adopted as resolutions that both directly and indirectly affect the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council). A summary of these resolutions is enclosed for your information.

Of specific interest to the Council is the resolution on North Pacific albacore requiring each IATTC member, cooperating non-member, fishing entity or regional economic integration organization (collectively "CPCs") to ensure that the level of fishing effort by their vessels fishing for North Pacific albacore tuna would not be increased beyond current levels. The resolution is not much different than the one in the Council's June briefing book except that the provision exempting fishing caps on vessels where the incidental catch of albacore does not exceed 15 percent of the total catch on a given trip was omitted in the final U. S. version. Further, a new section was added to the final resolution that acknowledges the development of North Pacific albacore fisheries in countries where such a fishery is currently limited. I have enclosed a copy of the resolution for your information.

The key intent of the North Pacific albacore resolution is to reduce fishing mortality. Specifically, the resolution calls for the total level of fishing effort for North Pacific albacore not be increased beyond current levels. As the Council begins to address how to maintain North Pacific albacore fishing effort at current levels, it will need to determine how best to achieve this by use of either effort or catch controls. It is my understanding that Canada may be looking at total allowable catch as the mechanism they will use for implementing the resolution.

Other resolutions adopted at IATTC included one on shark conservation calling for CPCs to establish and implement national plans of action for conserving shark stocks in accordance with the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks. Also, a resolution on the incidental mortality of seabirds



supports that all CPCs inform the IATTC of the status of their national plans for reducing incidental catches of seabirds in longline fisheries and, if appropriate, implement the International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries if they have not yet done so.

The resolutions pertaining to sharks and seabirds have been addressed in other forums including the U.S. National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks in 2001, the Shark Finning Prohibition Act, the U. S. National Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries, and the longline seabird mitigation measure contained in the regulations implementing the West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan. Consequently, I do not foresee the need for any additional action by the Council regarding sharks and seabirds at this time.

I also wanted to mention that the effort by the U. S. Delegation to increase the bigeye tuna longline catch limit from the current 150 mt per year level to 250 mt for U. S. fishermen was unsuccessful.

In closing, please be assured that the National Marine Fisheries Service remains available to assist the Council in addressing the North Pacific albacore fishery issue as well as other highly migratory species issues. Please feel free to contact me or Mark Helvey at 562-980-4040 if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Rodney R. McInnis  
Regional Administrator

Enclosures (2)

cc: William Robinson - PIRO  
William Fox - SWFSC

## **Summary – Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission’s 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting**

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) held its 73<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting, June 20-24, 2005, in Lanzarote, Spain. Subsidiary meetings also conducted included the Joint Working Group on Fishing by Non-Parties, the Permanent Working Group on Compliance, and the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity. (Current IATTC resolutions may be found on the Commission’s website at: [www.iattc.org](http://www.iattc.org).)

### **Resolutions Adopted at the June 2005 IATTC Meeting:**

- Resolution on Northern Albacore Tuna – requires that the total level of fishing effort for North Pacific albacore tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) not be increased beyond current levels. In addition Contracting Parties, cooperating non-Parties, fishing entities and regional economic integration organizations (collectively CPCs) are asked to report all catches of North Pacific albacore tuna by gear type to the IATTC every six months. The resolution also calls upon the Western and Central Pacific Ocean Commission (WCPFC) to consider taking such action as may be necessary to ensure the effective conservation and management of North Pacific albacore tuna throughout its range and to work in close concert with the IATTC.
- Consolidated Resolution on Bycatch – extends the requirements of the resolution until January 2007. The resolution requires full retention of juvenile tunas and non-target species of fish, and provides for a review of compliance on the full retention measure (by flag state or entity) to take place in the Permanent Working Group on Compliance in 2006.
- Resolution on the Conservation of Sharks Caught in Association with Fisheries in the Eastern Pacific Ocean - bans shark finning and also aims to improve information about sharks in EPO fisheries. The Shark Resolution mandates much needed shark data collection and assessment programs while encouraging research into shark nursery areas and ways to avoid incidental bycatch of sharks. This resolution, co-sponsored by the United States, the EU, Japan and Nicaragua, calls upon IATTC members to implement National Plans of Action for Shark Conservation in accordance with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization 1999 International Plan of Action for Sharks. The IATTC is to work cooperatively with WCPFC to provide preliminary advice on the status of sharks and to propose a research plan.
- Resolution on Incidental Mortality of Seabirds – requires all CPCs to implement the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries if they have not yet done so. All CPCs are encouraged to collect and voluntarily provide the IATTC with all available information on interactions with seabirds, including incidental catches in all fisheries under the purview of the IATTC. The Working Group on Stock Assessment will present to the IATTC an assessment of the impact of incidental catch of seabirds resulting from the activities of all the vessels fishing for tunas in the EPO.
- Resolution Concerning the Adoption of Trade Measures to Promote Compliance - adopted ad referendum (El Salvador must have approval from their legislature). The resolution establishes criteria and procedures for trade measures to promote compliance and allows multilateral trade actions against non-complying nations. First proposed last

year, the resolution was finally adopted with the addition of the following statement added: "The Commission recognizes the importance of market access, consistent with national legislation, for fish and fish products caught in conformity with the conservation and management measures of IATTC, to promote compliance with such measures."

- Resolution on Financing – adopted for FY2006. The resolution included approval of the IATTC operating budget for FY 2006. The finance resolution itemizes what each member is to pay for FY 2006, but again does not include the formula that was developed by the Finance Working Group and which is contemplated as part of the new Antigua Convention.
- Resolution to Establish a List of Vessels Presumed to Have Carried Out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Activities in the Eastern Pacific Ocean – sets criteria for listing and de-listing of vessels on an IATTC IUU vessel list and establishes reporting requirements. A list of IUU vessels fishing in the EPO was also adopted. This vessel list stems from the 2004 resolution addressing IUU fishing and for 2005 includes longline vessels from Belize, Georgia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Taiwan, and several vessels of unknown flag. Colombian purse seine vessels were also included in this list of IUU vessels.

#### **Other Recommendations and Accomplishments**

- A Plan for Regional Management of Fishing Capacity was adopted. This is a general plan which does not set any actual capacity limits. It is based on the FAO's regional plan of action on capacity.
- A list of cooperating parties was adopted. Cooperating parties must request to be listed as a cooperating party annually. For 2005, the cooperating parties are Canada, China, the European Union, Honduras, and Chinese Taipei (Taiwan).
- It was agreed to amend the rules of procedure to allow a two-year chairmanship of the IATTC meetings. Nominations will be requested and a mail vote will occur before the next meeting in 2006.
- Korea joined the IATTC and the 74<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the IATTC will be held in Pusan, Korean. It is an IATTC tradition that the new member host the upcoming annual meeting and Korea offered to sponsor the next meeting. The Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) and working groups meetings will be held June 19-23, and the IATTC meeting June 26-30, 2006.

#### **Other Discussions and Unresolved Issues:**

- Sea Turtles - Amendments to the Consolidated Resolution on Bycatch to further elaborate sea turtle interaction requirements was discussed but not adopted. Spain and France discussed their concerns regarding circle hooks. Japan offered to host the next Bycatch Working Group in January or February of 2006 where, it is hoped, the issue will be resolved so that a resolution can be adopted at the next IATTC meeting.
- Longline Bigeye Quota – The fact that some nations have only very small longline catches of bigeye was discussed. A subsequent U.S. proposal to exempt nations with a

total catch of 250 mt or less from the quota system for one year was blocked by Korea. Individual purse seine vessel quotas were also discussed but no consensus was reached.

- VMS: The Secretariat recommendations for changes in VMS reporting system and voluntary use of VMS. The 2004 Resolution on Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) were reviewed. This resolution requires that VMS be installed on tuna fishing vessels 24 meters or more in length operating in the EPO by January 1, 2005, or as soon as possible thereafter. This resolution mandated reports from members regarding VMS compliance. At the recent annual meeting a summary of these reports was reviewed, and it was agreed to that the current resolution continue in force.
- Capacity Amendments: Amendments to The Revised 2002 Resolution on the Capacity of the Tuna Fleet Operating in the EPO were discussed. Several members presented proposals for changes in their capacity limits. Two amendments of importance to the United States continue to be bracketed in the amended document. The United States will revisit these two issues at the next Working Group on Fleet Capacity to be held prior to the next annual IATTC meeting in 2006.

**Issues Introduced but not Fully Discussed or Decided:**

- Ecosystem approach to management: The United States proposed that all decisions take into account the effect on associated ecosystems.
- Bigeye: Proposals to reduce the bycatch of bigeye tuna by FADs (including the prohibition on the use of FADs).
- Transshipments: Proposals to regulate, ban and/or limit transshipment on the high seas.
- Conservation of tunas: Extension of program past the current 2006 recommendations.

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION  
COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DEL ATÚN TROPICAL

**73<sup>RD</sup> MEETING**

LANZAROTE (SPAIN)  
20-24 JUNE 2005

**PROP IATTC-73-C1**

**PROPOSAL BY JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES**

**RESOLUTION ON NORTHERN ALBACORE TUNA**

*The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)*, having responsibility for the scientific study of tunas and tuna-like fishes of the eastern Pacific Ocean, and for the formulation of recommendations to the Contracting Parties, cooperating non-Parties, fishing entities and regional economic integration organizations (CPCs) with regard to the conservation and management of these resources,

*Observing* that the best scientific evidence on North Pacific albacore tuna from the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean indicates that the species is either fully exploited, or may be experiencing fishing mortality above levels that are sustainable in the long term, and

*Taking note* that the IATTC staff has said that the stock assessment for Northern Pacific albacore tuna suggests a need for management measures to avoid increases in fishing mortality, and

*Recognizing* the importance of working with the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC), as provided for in Article XXIV of the Antigua Convention, in order to manage North Pacific albacore tuna throughout its migratory range, and

*Recalling further* Article 22(4) of the WCPFC Convention that provides for cooperation with the IATTC regarding fish stocks that occur in the convention areas of both organizations;

*The IATTC therefore resolves that:*

1. The total level of fishing effort for North Pacific albacore tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean not be increased beyond current levels.
2. The CPCs shall take necessary measures to ensure that the level of fishing effort by their vessels fishing for North Pacific albacore tuna is not increased;
3. All CPCs shall report all catches of North Pacific albacore tuna by gear type to the IATTC every six months.
4. The Director shall, in coordination with other scientific bodies conducting scientific reviews of this stock, monitor the status of North Pacific albacore tuna and report on the status of the stock at each annual meeting;
5. The CPCs shall consider future actions with respect to North Pacific albacore tuna as may be warranted based on the results of such future analysis.
6. The CPCs call upon the members of the WCPFC to consider, at the earliest opportunity, taking such action as may be necessary to ensure the effective conservation and management of North Pacific albacore tuna throughout its range including, in particular, measures to ensure that fishing effort on the stock in the WCPFC area does not increase and, as necessary, measures to reduce fishing effort to levels commensurate with the long-term sustainability of the resource.
7. The Commission through the Director shall communicate with the WCPFC and request them to take

similar measures.

8. The provisions of paragraph 2 shall not prejudice the rights and obligations under international law of those coastal CPCs in the EPO whose current fishing activity for northern Pacific albacore tuna is limited, but that have a real interest in, and history of, fishing for the species, that may wish to develop their own fisheries for northern Pacific albacore tuna in the future.